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L E T T E R  
TO THE  
LANDED GENTLEMEN  
AND  
G R A Z I E R S  
OF  
L I N C O L N S H I R E :

In which are pointed out the principal Causes of the present Redundancy of Wool, and the Exportation of it, proved to be impolitic and dangerous; together, with the Proposal of a more safe and certain Remedy.

Occasioned by, and interspersed with Observations upon, Sir John Dalrymple's Question on that Subject.

By a FRIEND and NEIGHBOUR.

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This is a Subject which will deserve the Consideration of every landed and every commercial Man in the Kingdom; of the meanest Beggar, as well as the King and his Parliament.

Sir J. DALRYMPLE, p. 25.

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C A M B R I D G E,

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(PRICE ONE SHILLING.)

J. F. T. B. R.  
TO THE  
*W. Musgrave.*  
LAND

to which are pointed out the principal causes  
of the present Reduction of Wool, and  
the expectation of its being to be improved  
and dangerous; together with the probability  
of a more time and money.



Respectfully, and in obedience to the  
order of the Trustees of the British Museum, on the  
10th of June 1781.

By: FRIEND and NEIGHBOUR.

This is a subject which will deserve the Consideration  
of every landed and every commercial man in the  
Kingdom: of the manner in which, as well as the King  
and his Parliament.

See J. Daines, p. 22.

C. A. M. B. I. D. O. E.  
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A  
L E T T E R  
T O T H E  
LANDED-GENTLEMEN, &c.

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I HAVE just read, Gentlemen, with great care and attention, and I hope it will appear with great disinterestedness and impartiality, Sir John Dalrymple's Treatise on the Question concerning the Exportation of Wool; and it gives me great concern, as it must do every man of feeling, to find himself obliged to differ from a writer of so distinguished a character, especially on a subject of such importance to the community.

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BUT



BUT since it is not improbable that interested men may take the opportunity of so great a name espousing their cause, to hang out false colours, and triumph over persons on the other side of the question; I have ventured to offer a few thoughts in reply to Sir John's pamphlet; how far they may be deemed an answer to his question, is submitted to the discernment, and determination of the candid, and impartial publick.

I AM sorry I cannot, consistently, accompany Sir John in the same order in which he has thought proper to arrange his thoughts; but must take the liberty to make my first observation on that paragraph, page the 8th, where we shall find one of his most important facts: he there says, "In ancient times, the wool of England was in as great estimation at European markets as the wool of Spain."

SIR John does not seem equally happy in the reason he there assigns, why it is not so at present.

IT



It is a pity so great a man had not an opportunity, before he published his opinion upon this subject, of knowing, That the great increase made by the Lincolnshire gentlemen (even within these thirty years) in the length and weight of their fleeces, is not a proof that it is of a better quality, or that it is an improvement in the growth of wool; but that on the contrary, it suggests a good reason to those who know the fact, why it does not now bear an equal estimation (as it formerly did) with the Spanish wool, for in proportion to its increase in length and coarseness, it differs from the quality of the wool of Spain.

It must be left to a person of Sir John's superior abilities, to reconcile this with what he allows, nay, advances in the same page, where he asserts, that the Spaniards have improved their wool by growing it finer; whereas he had immediately before taken it for granted (as he does too many of his positive assertions) that the traders of Lincolnshire have

been improving their's, by increasfing the length and weight of their fleeces; though it fhould feem by their prefent alarm, that they have not been able to convince the manufacturers of any one country, that it is in reality an improvement. So far is this from being the cafe, that I have the authority of the moft fenfible and experienced merchants, of the greateft manufacturing county in the kingdom, to fay, that there is not at this time a market upon earth, where, what Sir John calls the *improved wool* of Lincolnfhire, is a defirable, or is deemed a ufeul commodity; and that this is not fo much to be accounted for, by any alteration made, either in the home confumption, or in the foreign demands for thofe goods which are made of ftrong wool, as to the great increafe which has been made to the coarfenefs of it within thefe thirty years.

SIR John takes upon him to fay, page 5, "The redundancy of wool is at prefent fo great in Britain, that it is funk in  
in



in many places 50, and in very few places less than 30 *per cent.*" He would have evinced the impartiality of his inquiries into this important affair much more, if he had added, that in some places it is not sunk at all, and in others greatly advanced. I must in this place take the liberty to remind Sir John Dalrymple, for he cannot be supposed ignorant of it, that it is not owing to any particular situation, that the sinking in the price of wool, is in some places 50, while in others it is only 30 *per cent.* nay, while in others it is greatly advanced, and in some more than doubled: but that this is in the proportion, which its quality now bears to that of ancient times, when the wool of England was in as great estimation at European markets, as the wool of Spain,

It also seems necessary to inform Sir John (you Gentlemen must know it) that the finest wool, which our manufacturers now substitute in the stead of Spanish wool, is at this time more than double



what the price of it was three years ago, or in former times.

If then some wools have sunk 50, some 30 *per cent.* while others have been greatly advancing; and if it is a notorious fact, that the smallest and finest have sunk least, and so in proportion; does it not from hence follow, that one is more desirable than the other *at home*? and can any advocate for exportation, give a reason why it should not be equally desirable to *foreigners*, who could only buy it, to carry it, when manufactured, to the same markets as ourselves?

The Lincolnshire breeders will, I hope, excuse me, if I venture to say, that it is a serious and melancholy truth, which they seem to acknowledge and feel the weight of; that the wool which they have endeavoured to improve, by increasing the weight of the fleeces, is the wool which at this time chiefly lies on their hands, and has actually sunk in price 20 *per cent.* more than any other wool in the kingdom.

dom. Grant but then an exportation, and that wool will be bought up to be sent abroad, which is most useful, both at home and at foreign markets; and this it appears is the finest.

LET us see how far I am countenanced and encouraged in this argument by some of Sir John Dalrymple's own assertions. With regard to Spain, our ancient rival at European markets, and who would be so once more, in case of exportation, he says, page 7, "But the fact is, that as the king of Spain has a duty of near 18d. a pound upon wool exported, none but the very *finest* is sent abroad, often not more than a small part of the very finest of the fleece." In the next page he says, "A tax upon the exportation of English wool, will, in one respect, operate exactly in the same manner, that a tax upon the exportation of wool from Spain, has operated; for, in order to escape the weight of the tax, the merchants will export *only* the *finest* kinds of wool, and the wool-growers knowing this, will



vie with each other who shall grow the finest."

I HAVE said, and it is an incontestable fact, that the finest wool in this kingdom, bears at this time the greatest price, and that the price is in proportion to its fineness; which naturally leads us to try by Sir John's criterion proposition iv, p. 3, whether it is not, likewise, the scarcest. He there says, "When there is a redundancy, the price will be low; when there is not, it will be high." By the kind assistance of Sir John Dalrymple, we are therefore advanced thus far in the argument, that small fine wool is at this time very dear at home, consequently very scarce; and that his *barometer* will easily and infallibly shew, that it should not, at this time, be allowed to be exported.

To this it may, perhaps, be replied, That care may and will be taken by a proper clause in the act, to prevent the exportation of such wool as is most useful at home; that is, the finest wool, or  
the



the finest part of the finest fleeces, especially when it appears as it does, by Sir John Dalrymple's *Barometer*, to be the dearest and scarcest. Is it necessary, after what has been said, to ask Sir John, whether he, or any other advocate for the exportation of wool, certainly knows that there is now a greater demand at foreign markets for coarse wool, in which our present redundancy chiefly if not solely consists, than at home? In short, is there a foreign demand for any kind of wool, unless it be the finest? which it appears is dear, consequently scarce, and therefore *useful*, if not *necessary*, at home: besides, is there a lawyer, or any other member of parliament, that will stand forth and say, it is possible to form such a clause as will not be liable to be evaded every hour, unless there are proper persons appointed by government to attend constantly, and diligently inspect while every cask is made up which will be allowed to be exported? not to say how difficult it would be to procure such a number of persons of known integrity,

tegrity, and properly skilled in this business. What must become of these men when the exportation "*is stopped in a moment?*" and when these officers' salaries are paid, (as it would be found necessary to have one in almost every town;) I would ask, Where will be Sir John's boasted revenue? Here it will naturally occur, that it is one of the first principles of a good financier to recommend such taxes as may be collected at the least expence.

THE next assertion of Sir John which I shall take the liberty to observe upon, is in page the 9th, where he says, "Prohibiting the Exportation sinks the price of wool, and causes a demand from foreign markets." Had he said, it has a tendency to enable the British to afford their manufactures cheaper at foreign markets than their rival nations, he would have been much nearer the truth, and would have spoken to a better purpose.

I SHOULD



I SHOULD be glad to engage your attention to this further consideration, viz, If wool is to be exported under the sanction of an act of parliament, I presume it must be done one of these two ways: it might be done by a temporary act, to be renewed on any emergency; but as a sudden alteration in the redundancy or scarcity of wool, or a certain prospect of such an alteration may possibly happen, by a general rot, and other concurring circumstances, immediately after the prorogation of parliament; a very considerable quantity of wool, perhaps the greatest part of the finest wool in the nation may be bought up and exported, to the great disappointment and irreparable loss of the community, before parliament can possibly assemble to guard against this evil: it is therefore most probable, that it will be proposed to lodge a discretionary power in the King and his Council, as has been sometimes done with respect to corn, to allow or prohibit an exportation.

THIS



THIS seems to be Sir John's plan, because he says, page 14th, "The price of wool will not be raised upon the manufacturer beyond a just medium; because the *moment* it rises above that medium, the exportation by law, which is proposed to be permitted only while the price is low, will be stopped." But as an exportation is to raise a revenue, it is not impossible that such a set of men may be in power as may be tempted to suffer that consideration to have so much influence on their deliberations, as greatly to bias their judgements; and how far it will be looked upon consistent with the British Constitution, to put it in the power of any minister to raise a revenue by proclamation, must be left to persons of quicker apprehensions and better judgements than mine to determine; but I will take upon me to say, that such a proposal would have caused some of our forefathers to shudder.

I would further observe, that if an exportation is once permitted, it may  
 o facilitate

facilitate the smuggling of wool when it is prohibited and most wanted at home, not only by taking from men's minds a sense of the heinousness of the crime, by its being sometimes allowed and established by law, but also by putting things into a regular method and train for procuring the wool, and carrying it to foreign countries; and may it not also be presumed, that when our neighbours, perhaps our enemies, have, by means of our raw materials, diverted our trade into their own channel, and thereby increased the demand for their manufactures, from even our present customers, and have fixed with them a regular trade and correspondence, that we shall find it difficult, if not impossible, to regain those customers when we please? especially as those they would then be connected with, and supplied by, can manufacture them cheaper than ourselves. If this is the case, an exportation once permitted must be continued, for the same reason it was first granted; viz. a redundancy in the wool of Britain. What the



the wisest man said of contention is applicable to many other affairs in life, and may justly be adopted here; *The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with.*

I MUST further trespass upon your patience, Gentlemen, while I inform you, that suffering the exportation of raw wool will not, in reality, add to the number of markets for the woollen manufactures, but only enable other nations, by employing their inhabitants; perhaps our own present manufacturers, to go to our present markets with our own commodities.

SIR John asserts, page 12th, In time of war it should be the object of a nation to export her less bulky commodities, for very good reasons, which he there assigns: taking this therefore for granted, ought we not to export our manufacturies, which are, at least, upon an average  
equal



equal to ten times the value, and in as little bulk as the raw materials?

It may not, perhaps, be thought impertinent to ask, whether you ever attended to this, which is a weighty consideration, That the manufacturers of a country, perhaps the most expert, are apt, nay, may possibly be obliged, for want of employ, to follow the raw materials, and carry with them a knowledge of those important improvements which have been made in the woollen manufactures in Britain, especially those useful and ingenious machines by which many men's work may be performed by a few children? Increasing the revenue, therefore, by decreasing the number of inhabitants, does not seem to be a scheme worthy of Sir John Dalrymple, or the Lincolnshire gentlemen.

It greatly adds to my happiness, and I hope it will do to my readers' satisfaction, in this argument, to find it confirmed by the reasoning of Sir John himself, in  
pages

pages 20 and 21, where he asserts, that in those Spanish provinces, i. e. Catalonia and Valencia, where the exportation of the raw materials is least encouraged, they have more industry, and wealth, and more population than, perhaps, all the rest of the Spanish provinces put together.

THE facts which Sir John produces from Lord Burleigh, Mr. Smith, Dr. King, Dr. Davenant, and others, of the last and present century, may serve to shew his great erudition, which is already too well known and established to want such feeble aid, but cannot with safety be implicitly followed by us till we have lived to see exactly the same state of things return; which period seems at present to be at no small distance.

THOSE arguments, therefore, which are grounded upon what happened in other countries, or in ancient times, may serve to amuse, but cannot instruct; and those who are led by them will, in all



all probability, find themselves wretchedly mistaken. One rock, which Sir J. Dalrymple, and other very sensible and worthy writers have struck against, if not split upon, is, that provisions being cheap, gives an advantage to a nation that depends upon its manufactures; whereas the very reverse is the fact, and facts are stubborn things: it is not florid harangues and well turned periods that will overthrow or shake them.

THIS is likewise one of those facts, which persons who have been engaged in any considerable manufactory know to their great disappointment and loss.

As this, however, is not a commonly received opinion by those who have published on this subject, it may require some explanation and proof.

THE advocates for each side of this question are agreed, that any manufacturing country (raw materials being equal) which can have the greatest quan-

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tity of work properly finished at the least expence, has the advantage of the rest.

Now *experience*, which is an unerring guide, tells us, that there is not one manufacturer in twenty, especially in large populous trading towns, that will do more work in a week than will maintain himself and family; and if he can purchase his provisions so cheap as to maintain himself and family with the wages of four days, he will not work either five or six; so that, according to this calculation, one-third of the manufacturer's labour is lost to the community; consequently one-third of our raw materials, when there is a redundancy, (and this alone will both cause and increase one,) must lie on hand, let the demand for our manufactures be ever so great and urgent. Add to this, that in such a situation the merchant, that he may be able to execute his orders, by way of enticing his neighbour's workmen, thinks it expedient to advance wages; his neighbour in his own defence does the same, which

which puts it further in the power of the workman to raise his demand yet higher, and to maintain his family with still less labour, which increases the evil, and makes bad worse.

I HOPE what I have advanced on this subject, will appear to every candid impartial reader to be grounded on facts and experience, and to proceed from just and clear reasoning, and from a desire to point out and encourage what appears to be a *real* improvement, and the *true* interest of the public.

THOSE who have read thus far with care and caution, and a candid disinterested impartiality, will, I flatter myself, be convinced of the truth and importance of what I have offered to their consideration, and will be ready to anticipate me, in the following conclusion; which will at the same time point out the principal cause, and the probable cure, of the present heavy complaint.

## CONCLUSION.

THAT one principal cause of the present redundancy, which chiefly consists in the long wool, is the great increase made by the Lincolnshire breeders, and others, in the coarseness of their fleeces, even within these thirty years; and as this has, I hope, clearly appeared, they need not be told that so far as this is the cause of the evil, the remedy is to alter their mode of breeding, from what it has been for thirty years past, and for the future grow their wool as near in quality as their interest, prudence, and other circumstances will admit, to that which was produced in ancient times, when the wool of England was in as much estimation at European markets as the wool of Spain.

I would not be understood as advising you, Gentlemen, to fly from one extreme to the other, which would be a work of great inconvenience and expence; all that

I wish



I wish to recommend is, that as you have been endeavouring to grow your wool coarser and heavier, for the last thirty years, you would now make it your study to grow it finer, till you find by the demand for it at market, that it is a desirable commodity; and till the price compared with the weight of the fleece, &c. renders it, upon the whole, the most eligible and advantageous to yourselves. This alteration is equally expedient and necessary; whether a power to export be denied, or granted, as the present coarse wool of Lincolnshire is unsaleable both at home and abroad.

It is also submitted to the Lincolnshire breeders, whether it would not be practicable to grow such kind of fleece, by procuring suitable crosses, as will be near the present weight, and at the same time of a smaller hair; i. e. whether it is possible to improve the fleece, not by increasing the thickness or strength of each respective hair, but by increasing their number and fineness on the same sheep.

ANOTHER cause which has not a little contributed to the same end, that is, a redundancy in the wool of Britain is the exceeding low price which provisions have been at for several years past. This has been the reason why our manufacturers have not worked so much as they are obliged to do in more scarce and dear times; the consequence of which is, that a proportionable part of our raw materials lie unworked upon the growers hands: the remedies for these evils, therefore, are:

To pay stricter attention to the breed of your sheep:

To give greater encouragement to the invention and use of those machines, by which one man or child may do the work of several:

To advance the price of provisions (by granting an exportation of bread-corn, &c.) so high as to oblige the manufacturer to work six instead of four days in the week, and enable the industrious farmer to maintain his family:

And to take more effectual methods in those counties, now solely appropriated



ated to agriculture, for employing such of their poor as are able, and would be willing to work, if proper employment was provided for them: for instance, men who are by age or accident, incapable of very laborious exercise, women not engaged by a young family, and children from eight to fourteen years of age; these are now maintained in idleness, by their respective parishes, and a heavy burden indeed they are, to the honest industrious cottager and housekeeper, many of whom are much more objects of charity than those poor whom they at present contribute to support in idleness, and consequently in disorder and debauchery. Now might not this be done, either on Mr. Gilbert's plan, or by having several houses of industry in every county, engaging one proper person to look after the poor of several parishes, where they have no workhouses to employ them. God forbid that any person (even the most superficial observer) should conclude from what I have here proposed, it is my wish to tyrannise over, or oppress the poor; so far

is that from being the case, that it always has been, and it ever shall be, my greatest happiness to promote their *real* interest, and to procure them (as much as my situation will admit of) a comfortable maintenance. But I am too well read in the history of man, to give that to the idle and infamous petitioner at my door, which is due to the honest and industrious family, who are, by diligence and application, supporting themselves, and enriching society.

I HOPE, Gentlemen, you will excuse this digression, and join with me in wishing that these schemes may be put into *immediate* execution, since so many of our workmen are at this time engaged in our fleets and armies.

I AM aware of, and, I hope, prepared to answer the following Objections:

**OBJEC-**



## OBJECTION I.

Our situation, soil, and climate, are such, as would render it impracticable to grow such kind of wool, as is now wanted, and here recommended.

THIS seems to be the opinion of Sir John Dalrymple; for he says, page 18, "The wools of France, are as various as the soils and climates of their provinces." I would not detain you, Gentlemen, from more serious reflections, by asking whether the breeders in Lincolnshire *have improved* their wool, within these thirty years past, by altering the soil and climate? but would proceed to observe, that it is to be greatly lamented, that gentlemen do not condescend to try, by proper experiments, whether this is a truth, before they produce it as one, at this critical juncture. However, as they will not be at this expence and trouble themselves, I must beg their indulgence, while I relate the following fact.

To

To try this experiment, a considerable Breeder procured from a distant county, a *coarse woolled* male and female sheep, and put them, and their offspring, into the same ground together: he at the same time, likewise, procured from an equally distant county, a *fine woolled* male and female; and also put them, and their offspring, into the same pasture, with the coarse woolled ones; and continued so to graze them, and their respective offspring, for three generations, constantly together; and at the end of that period, as well as at each respective clip-day, they had each of them, so far retained their original kind of wool, that the fine was worth nine-pence, and the other not worth three-pence; which was the proportion when first purchased.

THIS fact will be confirmed, and rendered more easy to be understood, by the following observation: an observation, which, those who are concerned in open commons, must have an opportunity of making every day; that sheep with

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very



very different skins, brought from distant counties, and kept on open commons; and thus grazed together for many years, will each retain their original kind of wool; and that if there is any alteration made in their offspring, it is only by the accidental crosses in a flock. To elucidate this proposition, let us further take two pieces, or parcels of lands, either in the same, or distant climates; so different in kind and richness, that eight acres of the one, will maintain an equal number of the same breed of sheep, just as well as twelve acres of the other: and though they be so stocked and grazed, for many years, or generations, the wool of each flock will, I believe, be found to have undergone no other alteration, than such as might have arisen, had they been grazed together, during the same space of time, in the same land.

## OBJECTION II.

If the breeders of Lincolnshire, are to improve the quality of their wool, by diminishing

minishing the weight of the fleeces; though they may be able to sell it at a higher price, by the pound, or stone, yet what they gain in quality, they lose in quantity: so that upon the whole, it will raise no more money, than it does at present; and, therefore, the remedy is as bad as the disease.

To what I have before hinted, I would now further add: that those sheep which produce, what Sir John calls, the improved long heavy fleeces of Lincolnshire, require more food to maintain them, than those sheep which produce the finer wool; not only, because the additional quantity of wool, requires an additional support; but also, because they are not possessed of that form, and shape, which is found necessary to such a constitution, as is inclinable to live, and feed, on less food; and at the same time, are far inferior to the latter, in the quantity, as well as quality of their mutton; so that the grazier, by supporting a greater number of those sheep, which produce the finer wool;



wool, may be able upon the same given quantity, and quality of food, to grow as great weight of wool, upon the whole, as he who attends solely to that breed, which produces the coarse fleeces; and will at the same time, have greatly the advantage, in the quantity, and quality of the flesh.

### OBJECTION III.

THE farmer is not to be helped out of his present difficulties, by raising the price of provisions, but by his landlord lowering the rent of his farm —

BUT do we find in the generality of landlords any such disposition? I anticipate the answer of ten thousand industrious farmers, in the negative! Since then, there is no probability of assistance coming from that quarter, before it is too late; their tenants *demand* it from another; an adequate price for their commodities — Grant them this — they ask, they

they wish for no more; but leave the landed-gentlemen, in full possession of wealth and prosperity; consequently, of inticement to generosity, and publick spirit. Shew yourselves then, Gentlemen, at this dangerous crisis, *true lovers* of your country, by contributing generously to its support; and the *latest posterity* shall look back with admiration on your characters, and compare you to those brilliant constellations, which in the darkness of the night, though apparently situated in the boundaries of space, dart their opportunely enlightening rays, even to the earth.

#### OBJECTION IV.

If by the third remedy, proposed, the manufacturers should be obliged to work six, instead of four days in a week, and we should employ more machines, &c. there is no reason to believe, that we shall have a demand, either at home, or from foreign markets, for such an additional quantity



quantity of goods, as will in that case be manufactured.

FROM the dearness and scarcity of the finer wool, it evidently appears, that there will be a demand for such goods, as are made of the finer wool; and as Sir John has taken so much pains to shew, and has *actually* shewn, that if a power *was* granted for exportation, none of the coarse heavy wool, would be bought up, to be sent abroad. The question is at last, fairly determined.

I WOULD only add, it is a pity the bounties of Providence should be perverted, and abused: but when this is the case, it is the part of a wise legislature, to take such measures, as will prevent its disorderly subjects, from destroying themselves, and ruining their country.

THE scheme proposed, as far as it respects the advancement of the price of provisions; at the same time, that it will be an advantage to the land-owner, and  
farmer,

farmer, and thereby enrich the community; will improve its morals, and prevent, and put a stop to, those vices, which are the sure destruction of any people. It will have a tendency to discourage idleness, drunkenness, and dissipation, the cause of almost all other enormities: it will promote domestic peace, and quiet; and train up the rising generation in a love and regard for those important virtues which exalt a nation.



The school proposed, as far as it respects the advancement of the price of provisions, at the same time, that it will be an advantage to the land-owner, and farmer.



